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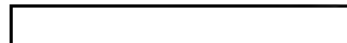
March 25, 1974

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ARAB LEAGUE: The Arab League foreign ministers' conference starting in Tunis today will apparently focus on relations with Europe and non-Arab Africa as well as on the forthcoming UN General Assembly special session on energy and development.

According to press reports, the conferees will also discuss the progress of the peace negotiations with Israel and renew their call for a complete withdrawal by Tel Aviv from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem.

Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, however, will probably wish to steer clear of any comprehensive discussions or sweeping conference declarations concerning the talks with Israel in order to avoid impairing their flexibility for negotiating.

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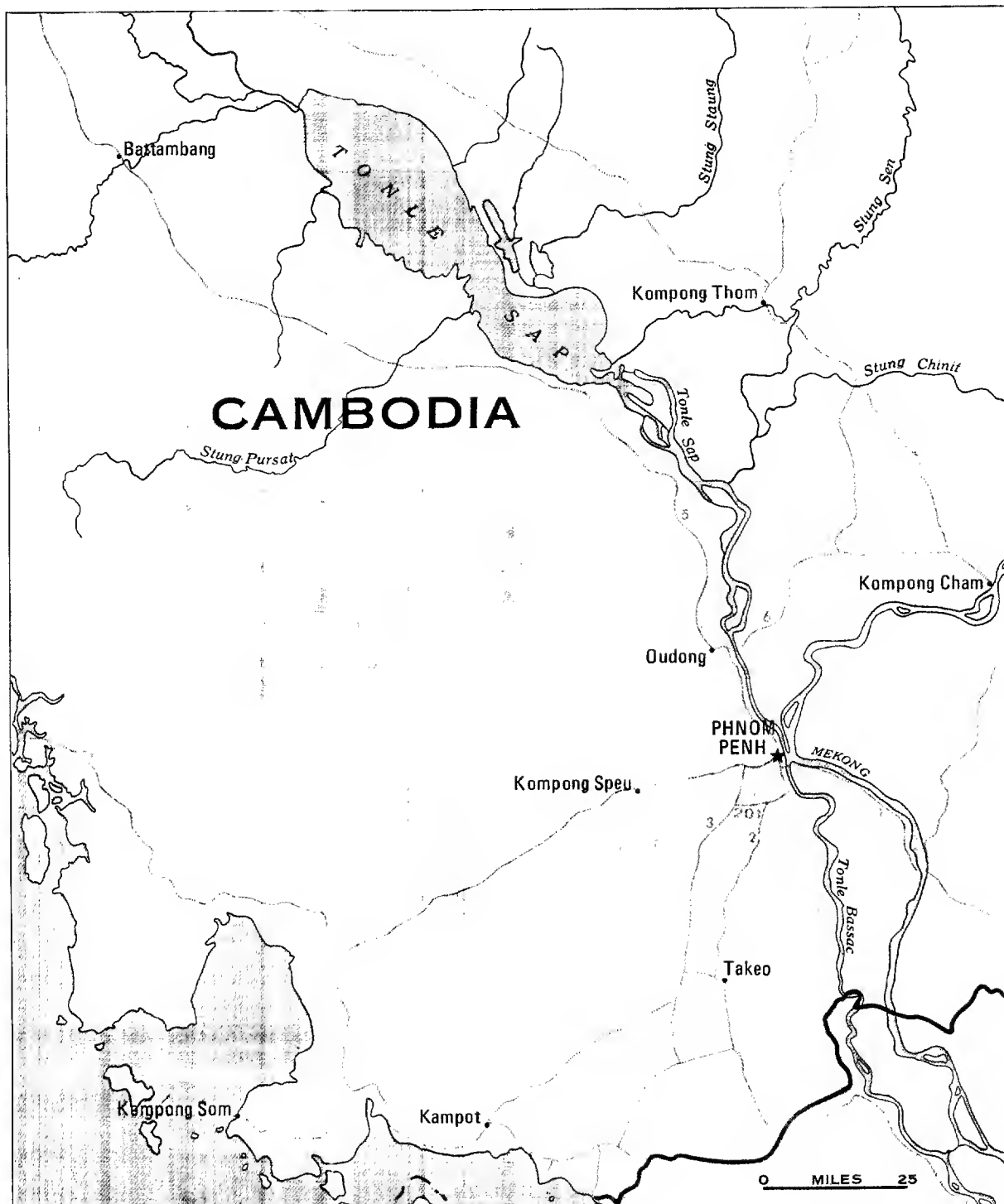
Syrian President Asad is particularly concerned that Arab forums of this nature might impel him to adopt a more rigid negotiating position at a time when he must keep his options open.

The Arab ministers will probably seek to overcome Libyan and Iraqi misgivings concerning the recent lifting of the oil embargo and to work out a joint strategy to pursue in the special UN session and with the European Community. The conference will probably form a committee to pursue the possibility of a dialogue with the Europeans on oil and related issues, in response to the Community's call for an Arab-European conference to be held before the end of the year.

The Dutch reportedly are also hopeful that the conference will recommend a lifting of the oil boycott against them. They claim that Kuwait has suggested such a move and that Saudi Arabia will not oppose it.

Cairo, Damascus, and Amman have agreed that the next Arab League summit conference, scheduled to open in Cairo on April 15, should be postponed, perhaps until September.

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CAMBODIA: Heavy fighting continues in the Oudong area northwest of Phnom Penh. A 2,000-man Cambodian Army relief column, which late last week moved west to within a mile of Oudong, is now stalled in the face of stiff resistance.

Another relief force is heading toward the town from the south but has made only limited progress. Government troops trying to work their way toward Oudong from the north have been diverted in reaction to increased pressure on other nearby army positions.

The army high command in Phnom Penh is giving top priority to the counterattack at Oudong. Convoys have moved armor and artillery up the Tonle Sap River to a beachhead several miles east of Oudong, and the encircled units just outside the town are receiving daily air support.

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Elsewhere, combat activity picked up somewhat in the Phnom Penh area over the weekend as Communist elements overran a government position ten miles southwest of the capital. Insurgent units also increased pressure against government defenses on the east bank of the Mekong River just upstream from the capital.

Government forces at the southwestern coastal town of Kampot have withstood several Communist ground attacks and shellings in the past few days.

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UGANDA: The shooting that took place in Kampala yesterday may have been the result of a short-lived coup attempt against President Amin, who himself came to power through a military coup in January 1971. By dawn yesterday, Kampala was reported quiet and troops loyal to the President were guarding key points in the capital. Amin apparently remains in full control.

According to press and radio reports from Kenya and Uganda, small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire broke out in Kampala shortly after midnight on Sunday, when elements of the Malire Mechanized Regiment--a key unit guarding the capital and generally considered loyal to Amin--are said to have occupied positions in the city. They allegedly were duped into action by General Charles Arube and others who led them to believe that an invading force was about to capture the city and kill Amin. A Ugandan military spokesman claimed that Arube died yesterday in a Kampala hospital of self-inflicted bullet wounds.

Arube was a former army chief of staff and a leading member of the Lugbara, the largest tribal group in the army and the chief rival of Amin's Kakwa tribe. This latest incident is likely to increase tribal animosities within the army and lead to reprisals.

Amin said yesterday that a special commission will be named by the defense minister to seek out and severely punish any others implicated in the plot.



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Tensions have risen within the army as Amin, a member of the country's Muslim minority, recently began another purge of Christian officers, such as General Arube. Purges and occasionally the murders of Amin's tribal rivals in the officer corps have eroded the army's morale and cohesiveness. Amin's success in placing his Kakwa tribesmen in important command positions seems to be the key factor in keeping the army under his control.

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JAPAN: Several million workers from government and private enterprise will strike on March 26 for increased wages and new benefits, as well as for the right of government workers to strike. The strike follows a nationwide labor shutdown on March 1 which paralyzed national railway traffic for 24 hours. Railway and mass transit workers will also participate in Tuesday's walkouts.

The strikes are part of the annual spring labor "offensive," but labor enthusiasm is greater than normal this year because of unhappiness over inflation. More strikes are scheduled for early April.

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